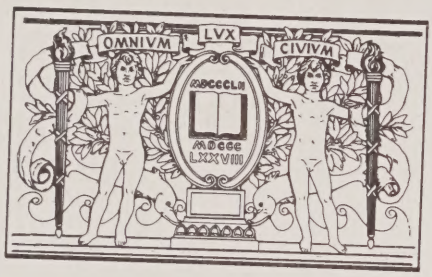
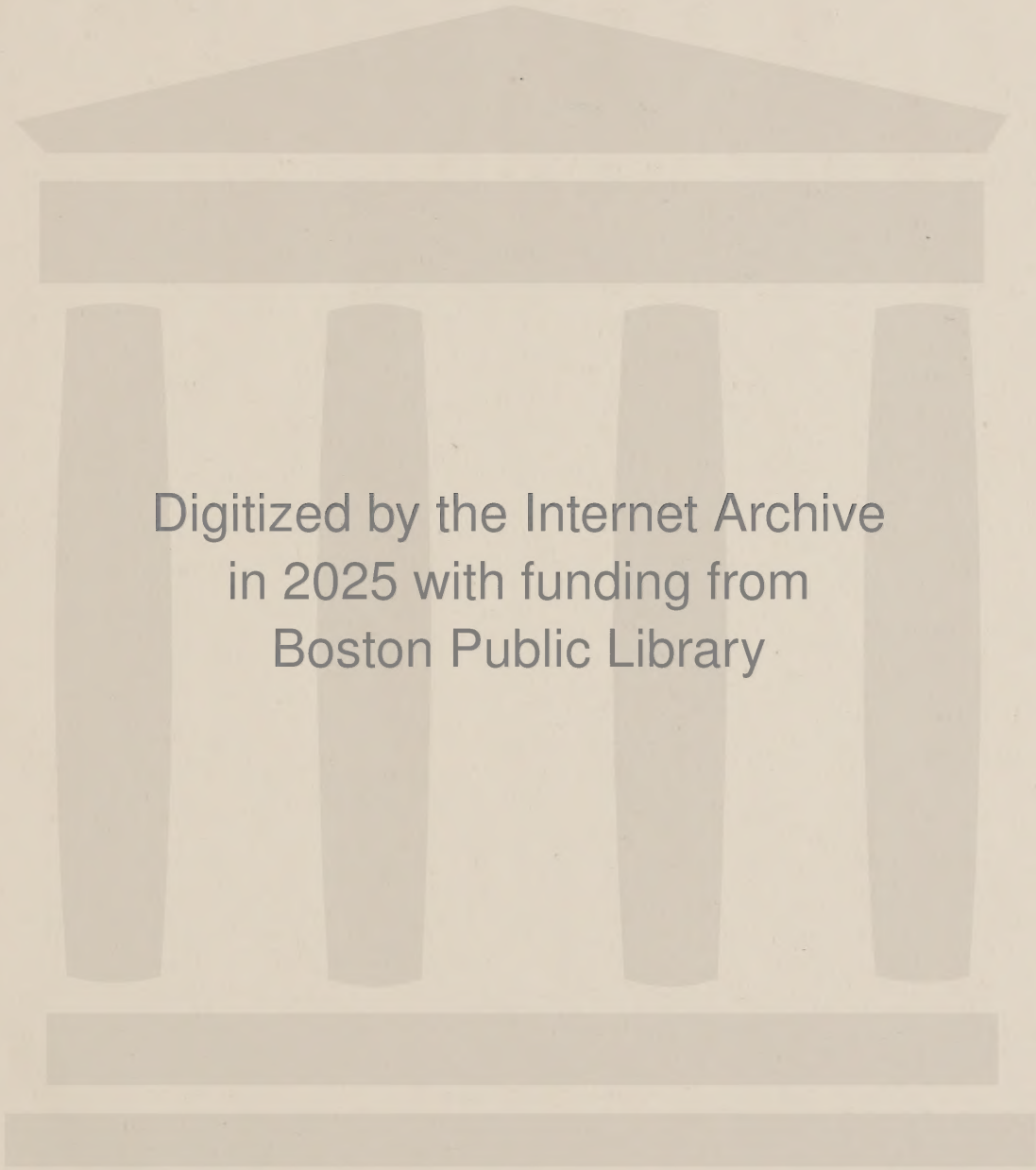
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 06586 488 4
M3/B16
RA
87/2



BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
Boston Public Library

https://archive.org/details/downtownzoningor00bost

DOWNTOWN ZONING ORDINANCES

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED
FEB 3 1987

G8700835
thru
G8700840

BRIEFING MATERIAL

CITY OF BOSTON ◻ RAYMOND L. FLYNN, MAYOR
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ◻ STEPHEN COYLE, DIRECTOR

ROBERT L. FARRELL, CHAIRMAN
JOSEPH J. WALSH, VICE-CHAIRMAN
JAMES K. FLAHERTY, TREASURER

M3/B16
RA
87/2
pt. 1 of 9

G8700836

DOWNTOWN ZONING REGULATIONS
BRIEFING DOCUMENT

In July of 1985, the Boston Redevelopment Authority published interim planning and development guidelines for downtown growth. This was the first effort of its kind in over twenty years. While their focus was on the downtown, the guidelines addressed city-wide goals: establishing an open community planning process; setting new development ground rules which insure balanced growth and economic opportunity; and striving for a more livable city for all Bostonians.

The Interim Guidelines initiated a three-month public process. During that time, over 2,000 representatives of community, business, cultural, and institutional groups were briefed on the content of the policies. A broad consensus was reached on a number of issues; many policies first presented in the Interim Guidelines have already been adopted:

- The Boston Civic Design Commission was created to review the designs of important new development projects.
- Amendments to the Zoning Code revised housing linkage payments.
- Amendments to the Zoning Code also established the first employment training program paid for by linkage funds.
- Housing Creation Regulations were adopted by the BRA to allow the direct creation of affordable housing with linkage funds.
- The Fair Employment Commission was created to provide a focus for fair employment issues.
- The Boylston Street IPOD was created after the completion of a zoning study.
- The Parcel to Parcel Linkage Program was adopted to help leverage neighborhood development through the disposition of city-owned parcels downtown.
- A comprehensive transportation plan was formulated to improve the city's traffic flow.

In August of last year, a package of Downtown Zoning Regulations was submitted for consideration to the Boston Redevelopment Authority Board. These regulations focus on the downtown, but also contain many important city-wide policies. The regulations incorporate changes from the July 1985 Interim Guidelines that reflect a fuller analysis of the policy issues as well as the comments that were received from the public. Most significant among these changes are:

- The protection of more historic buildings through zoning.
- The specification of a housing priority area within the Downtown IPOD Study Area boundaries to encourage housing production in certain areas.
- The proposal to extend the IPOD planning period from two years to three years.
- The simplification of the thirteen height limit districts into four height zones.
- The addition of the Barrier-Free Access Regulation to promote the full enjoyment of the city by disabled persons.

The proposed Downtown Zoning Regulations are designed to encourage and allow growth to occur, but are also designed to manage this growth. They also seek to preserve the features that make Boston a liveable city and to insure that it has a healthy future. The regulations set the stage for a comprehensive community process. The complexity and importance of the proposed Downtown Zoning Regulations warrant that this process proceed with a series of public comment sessions. These sessions will be opportunities for interested citizens and organizations to be brought up to date on the status of the ordinances, to ask questions, and to offer comments on the proposed new zoning. Over the next several weeks various groups will be briefed on the Zoning Regulations. The Boston Redevelopment Authority Board will then hold public comment sessions to elicit the responses of interested citizens and organizations prior to making its recommendations to the Zoning Commission.

MANAGING GROWTH

With an overall vacancy rate of 8% as of mid-year 1986, Boston's 42 million square feet of office space comprises one of the most attractive real estate markets in the nation. Thirty-six thousand jobs and $3.5 billion in development investment have been added to the economy since 1984. The major share of this growth has occurred within the 2 square mile area of downtown.

As the core of the regional economy and as a leading service sector economy, Boston is well positioned to grow at a faster rate than the national economy and to be less susceptible to national economic downturns. Managing this growth is a key to maintaining Boston as a place where people want to invest, and is a central objective of the proposed Downtown Zoning Regulations.

Managing growth requires a rational ordering of the development economy so that opportunities for growth are accommodated without jeopardizing a healthy investment climate. Managing growth is also concerned with achieving the full potential benefits of growth by promoting a balanced mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses in the city. Rather than discouraging growth, growth management through zoning will guard against oversupply, congestion, encroachment, and unreasonable environmental impacts that would devalue investment in the Boston economy.

Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District

The Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) establishes downtown growth policies. It restores height standards to the downtown for the first time in twenty years. The IPOD will be in effect for three years during which time final zoning for the downtown will be developed. The major features of the Downtown IPOD include the following:

- Four Height Districts are proposed: Priority Preservation Subdistricts (40' and 65'), Restricted Growth Subdistricts (80'-100'), Medium Growth Subdistricts (125'-155') and Economic Development Subdistricts (North Station: 250' with allowances to 350', and South Station/Bedford/Essex: 300' with allowances to 400').

- Housing Priority Subdistricts are proposed for areas in the downtown where at least 60% of a development project must be devoted to housing. Housing is also promoted by allowing residential uses in areas now zoned for other uses.

- Economic Development Area Subdistricts are designated in the North Station and South Station/Bedford-Essex areas to encourage mixed-use developments in areas that have good transit access but are under-utilized. To be eligible for additional height allowances, developments in these areas must provide public benefits, such as open space, transportation improvements, and affordable housing.

- Interim Planning Permits are required for proposed development projects in the downtown. The BRA would review development proposals based on their conformity with IPOD height standards, their design, their transportation and environmental impact and other criteria established in the IPOD. The BRA would then forward its recommendation for the project to the Board of Appeal, which would grant or deny the IPOD permit based on the BRA's recommendation.

Planned Development Areas

Planned Development Area (PDA) policies have been revised to make them consistent with interim planning guidelines contained in the IPOD, which address such issues as height standards, permitted uses, and compliance with specific planning and design criteria.

The one type of PDA that now exists would be replaced with four special purpose PDAs: Housing, Mixed-use, Institutional, and Financial District.

- Housing PDAs require a minimum site area of 20,000 square feet, with at least 75% of the gross floor area to be used for residential purposes. In the Downtown IPOD Study Area these projects are permitted in Medium Growth Subdistricts and Economic Development Areas. In accordance with Downtown IPOD requirements, Housing PDAs in Medium Growth Subdistricts may exceed established height standards by 50%-100% for a total building height of 233'-310'. Housing PDAs would also be permitted outside the downtown.

- Mixed-use PDAs require a minimum site area of one acre with at least 51% of the gross floor area to be used for residential purposes. In the Downtown IPOD Study Areas these projects are allowed in Medium Growth Subdistricts and Economic Development Area Subdistricts. They are not permitted elsewhere in the city. Mixed-use PDAs in Medium Growth Subdistricts may exceed the as-of-right height guidelines set forth in the Downtown IPOD by 50%-100% for a total building height of 233'-310'.

- Institutional PDAs require a minimum site area of one acre and will be allowed city-wide. IPOD height standards are not relaxed for Institutional PDAs. At least seventy-five (75%) percent of the gross floor area shall be devoted to Institutional Uses.

- Financial District PDAs require a minimum site area of one acre. Financial District PDAs will only be approved if they meet strict planning and design criteria; they must also not be purely speculative office buildings but must include substantial leasing by the developer for its own activities. Building heights may exceed subdistrict height standards to a maximum of 400'.

Historic Preservation

The proposed Historic Preservation amendment seeks to preserve the structural elements of the city that are of architectural and historical merit to New England and the nation. The protection and enhancement of the special architectural, historical and cultural heritage of the city is necessary and desirable to protect and improve the city's economy by enhancing both property values and the city's attractiveness to tourists, visitors, and businesses. The amendment would:

- Allow the protection of nearly 300 historically and architecturally significant buildings in the downtown area.

- Permit the Boston Landmarks Commission to designate the buildings that need protection, while directly designating dozens of the most significant buildings in the city.

Institutional Master Plans

Ten percent of downtown Boston's land is devoted to institutional uses: medical, educational, and governmental facilities. These institutions contribute much to Boston, but they also impose particular burdens on the city. The proposed Institutional Master Plan amendment to the Zoning Code would apply throughout the city and would:

- Require institutions to submit and have approved a Master Plan for future growth, before any large-scale development is approved.

- Establish formal review of these plans by the public and by the BRA.

- Provide a comprehensive analysis of the institution's proposed expansion and its impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

PROMOTING THE LIVEABLE CITY

More than just the location of a growing economy, Boston is a liveable city. A liveable city is one where there are plenty of open spaces for families to picnic or to play softball; where there are affordable opportunities to live close to work, stores, and entertainment; and where barriers to everyone's full participation in the city, whether in an office building or a movie theater, are removed. This city is liveable because there is an awareness of our common heritage as citizens and as trustees of the natural and structural beauty of Boston.

Frederick Law Olmsted, the architect of Boston's great open space system, believed that the design of places which brought people together on common ground reinforced the common interests which bonded people together and

de-emphasized the self interests which held them apart. This idea, which Olmsted called "communicativeness", is a point of departure for planning and designing cities, whether it be through the design of a new building or the preservation of a beautiful old one.

Boston, like all cities, is constantly changing. Along with creating opportunities to improve the quality of life of its citizens, growth and change can threaten those elements of a city that citizens cherish. Growth now presents Boston with an historic opportunity to shape the city for years to come. The proposed downtown zoning regulations have as a primary objective to use this opportunity to promote and to protect those values and attributes of Boston that make it one of the most liveable cities in the world.

Environmental Mitigation

The proposed Environmental Mitigation regulation requires developers of large-scale projects to submit studies which analyze the direct and indirect environmental impact of the project. Specific features of the amendment include the following:

- An environmental mitigation study will be required of developers proposing projects in excess of 25,000 square feet, or residential projects of greater than thirty units.

- Developers will propose mitigation measures for review and approval by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, in addition to the required analysis of the building's impact on such elements as pedestrian, wind, and shadow levels.

Barrier-Free Access

The proposed Barrier Free Access regulation is intended to promote easier access to the full enjoyment of the city's resources by disabled persons. The article has two goals. They are to ensure the creation of housing that is adequate for the needs of Boston's disabled citizens, and to minimize architectural barriers which prevent access to public spaces. Provisions of the amendment include the following:

- Commercial and retail projects of more than 10,000 square feet must be accessible to disabled persons.

- Five percent of hotel and residential uses with twelve or more units must be accessible to disabled persons.

- The Boston Redevelopment Authority will establish regulations with reference to Massachusetts Architectural Barriers Board requirements to ensure accessibility.

Open Space Zoning

The open space amendment to the Zoning Code establishes an open space zoning district that allows the city to classify land, such as the Common, the Public Garden, and the Esplanade, as open space. The amendment preserves and protects open space from the pressures of development and maintains it for recreational purposes. The major provisions of this amendment are as follows:

- Certain publicly-owned land could be zoned as open space, including the waterway areas within city boundaries.

- No structures would be permitted on land zoned as open space except those accessory to open space uses.

- No development of land zoned as open space could occur without a rezoning, which would require the approval of the Zoning Commission after a public hearing.

IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

Transportation is among the most important land use issues facing Boston today. Transportation uses currently claim 40% of the two square mile area that constitutes the downtown. The location and availability of transportation services play a critical role in determining the city's form and the relationship between the downtown and the neighborhoods.

Boston's transportation policies are shaped by a careful balance of land uses and an understanding of the different transportation preferences of people who live, work, or visit here. The strong downtown economy cannot benefit the city, indeed it cannot function, if the jobs, services, and products it generates are not easily accessible to those who want and need them. Transportation policies are also critical to the city's ability to stimulate investment on the periphery of the downtown and in the neighborhoods.

Boston's transportation policy framework includes efforts to increase the capacity of the existing transportation system through road and bridge improvements and traffic management programs; to develop attractive and feasible alternatives such as water transportation; and to work with the state to upgrade and expand public transit services to encourage ridership. The Transportation Access Plan ordinance is proposed in response to an understanding of the significant impacts of development on the city's transportation system, and therefore on the quality of life and the functioning of the economy in Boston.

Transportation Access Plans

The proposed Transportation Access Plans Article addresses the traffic and parking impacts of major projects throughout the city. The major features of the amendment are the following:

- Developers of large-scale projects must submit a Transportation Access Plan which identifies the traffic impacts of the development and which proposes mitigation measures.

- If adequate mitigation measures cannot be tendered, the developer must contribute to a fund earmarked for transportation improvements within close proximity to the development site.

- The in-lieu contribution may not exceed $.50 per square foot of the project.

ENCOURAGING AN OPEN COMMUNITY PROCESS

Community planning rests with the central premise that all knowledge does not reside with the government and that plans work only if they are fashioned with the community's assistance. This idea distinguishes this planning process from any past efforts.

Until recently, the citizens of Boston did not have a strong voice in shaping the growth policies of their city. As a result, planning activities left unmet many of the needs and quality of life issues in Boston's neighborhoods. Boston serves a diverse constituency. It is essential to any efforts that affect Boston's quality of life that all of these voices be heard.

Taken together, the proposed Downtown Zoning Ordinances form the basis for ordering Boston's growth in a fair, open, and comprehensive way. Enactment of these amendments would send a clear and definite signal to developers, investors, and the community at-large that Boston intends to grow but only in a way that balances the benefits of growth with a dedicated appreciation of our heritage and an abiding commitment to economic opportunity.

Three-Year IPOD

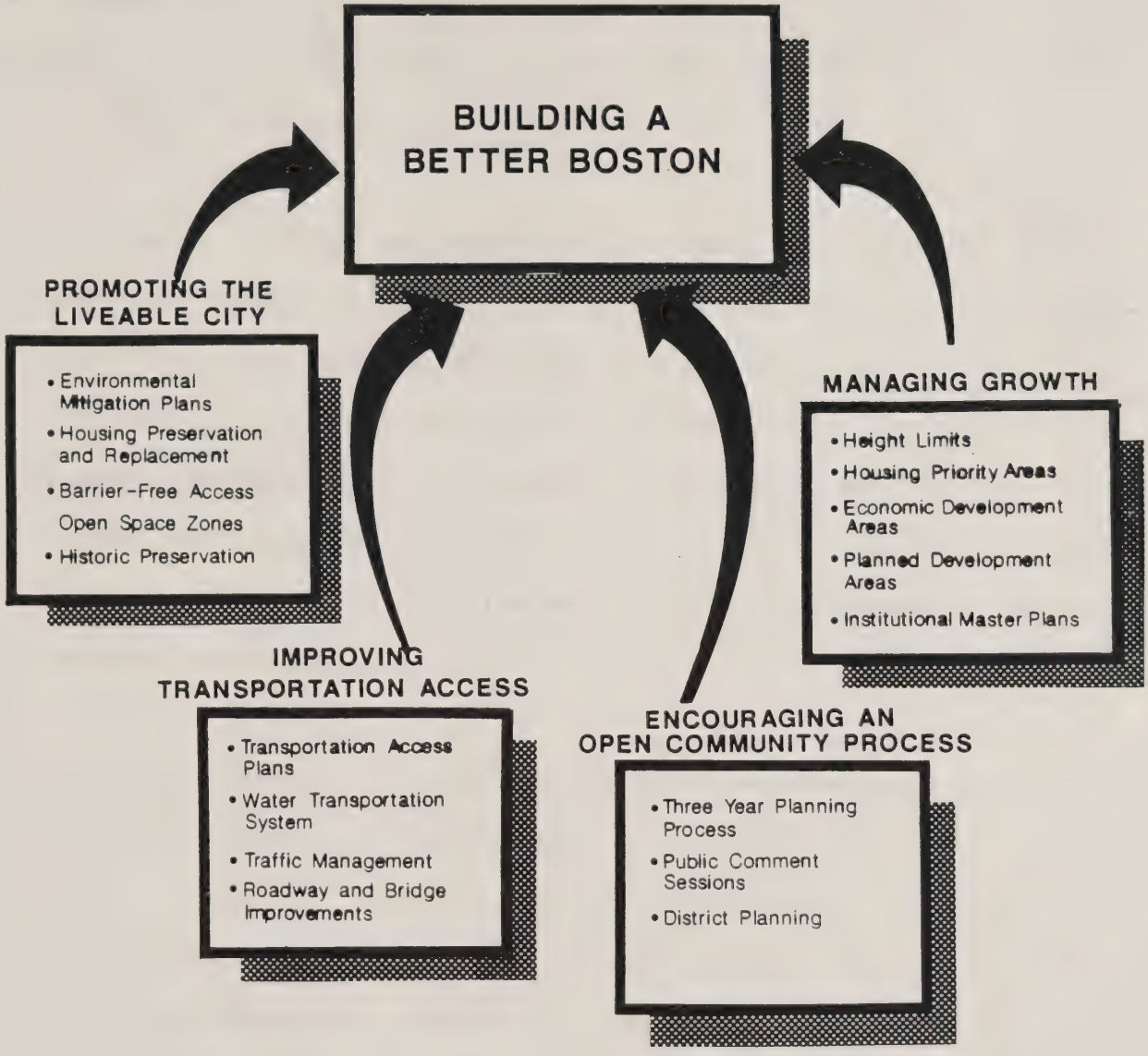
Boston's present zoning code does not address effectively the zoning and land use issues currently facing the city. In addition, the code does not provide all the tools necessary for the city to achieve its broader planning goals. The Downtown Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) is proposed to implement Boston's new land use and zoning policies until the existing zoning code is comprehensively revised.

The current Interim Planning Overlay District enabling ordinance provides for a two-year IPOD period. To allow sufficient time to plan the downtown fairly, openly, and comprehensively, an amendment is proposed to extend the IPOD period to three years.

District Planning Process

Several areas of the downtown will be the subject of community based planning initiatives modeled after the Boylston Street Zoning process. During the next three years, these initiatives will be undertaken for ten additional downtown areas. The studies will examine anticipated development impacts on each area and design specific strategies to address important issues. The studies, which will vary depending upon major community concerns, will examine particular design and development issues and formulate strategies for public improvements, district guidelines, historic preservation, zoning amendments, housing affordability, and traffic management. Planning for all the special districts will be undertaken in conjunction with interested citizens and community groups.

M3/B16
RA
87/2
pt. 2 of 9



M3/B16
RA
87/2
pt. 3 of 9

MIDTOWN/CULTURAL DISTRICT PLAN

The performing and visual arts are an important part of Boston's heritage and contribute greatly to this city's quality of life. The arts are also an asset to the local economy. Over $166 million was added to Boston's economy in 1984 by performing and visual arts.

In order to carry on the tradition of a thriving cultural life in Boston the BRA and the Mayor's Office of the Arts and Humanities are working together with local artists to formulate a plan that will address the needs of Boston's arts community and will revitalize the midtown area of downtown Boston. Boston's Theatre District has hosted the performing arts for more than 200 years. Yet today, almost half of the theaters in that area are dormant. Local artists are faced with a severe shortage of performance, rehearsal, storage, and office space.

The Midtown/Cultural District plan will transform the area into a concentrated center of cultural activity for Boston and all its neighborhoods. The overall plan will set height, density and design guidelines for new construction in the area and it will promote a mix of new cultural, office, retail, hotel and housing developments. Thirteen new mixed-use development sites will incorporate in their project proposals significant contributions to cultural uses in the planning area. The planning area encompasses Park Square, the Theater District, Downtown Crossing and the Bedford-Essex Street corridor. Elements of the plan include:

IPOD4/F/012787/1

- Protecting existing active theatres and revitalizing dormant and under-utilized theatres for cultural uses;

- Creating new spaces for cultural uses that meet the special needs of Boston's established and emerging artists;

- Generating a plan to finance the construction and operation of cultural facilities that would be open to all Boston residents;

- Linking the development of several prime sites in the midtown area to promote cultural uses;

- Incorporating a mix of office, residential, cultural, retail, and public space uses that will transform the midtown into a part of the city that is alive at all times for all residents.

Planning Concept

Boston is one of very few cities which has a concentration of theaters in one district. The Midtown/Cultural District Plan will use this set of active and empty theatres as the basis for a performing and visual arts center to serve Boston, its neighborhoods and all of New England.

The plan will focus on strengthening the two concentrations of the seven existing theaters in the district as the "East" and "West" wings while using the large "Hinge Block" between them as a connecting Center for Fine Arts. The large theaters of the Cultural District will serve as its major institutions

providing identity and stability for the area. "Theatre Boulevards" will be developed along the fronts of these theatres creating a vital streetscape comparable in image and importance to Broadway in New York City.

Smaller entertainment uses will be prompted through the development of "Theatre Alleys." Playing a role similar to "Off-Broadway" in New York City, the "Theatre Alley" concept will focus on smaller scale activities. New and experimental productions, cabarets and nightclubs will be encouraged. Boylston Place and Warrenton Street are current examples of how the "Theatre Alley" concept can be realized.

The other main streets in the Midtown/Cultural District will act as connectors within the district and to adjacent neighborhoods as well. Ground floor uses such as art supply stores, restaurants, galleries and evening retail activities will be encouraged. A series of open and glass-covered public spaces and detailed information signage will also be an important addition to the district. Public gathering spaces for free performances or public displays of art will also support and encourage the pedestrian-related atmosphere of the district.

Design Study

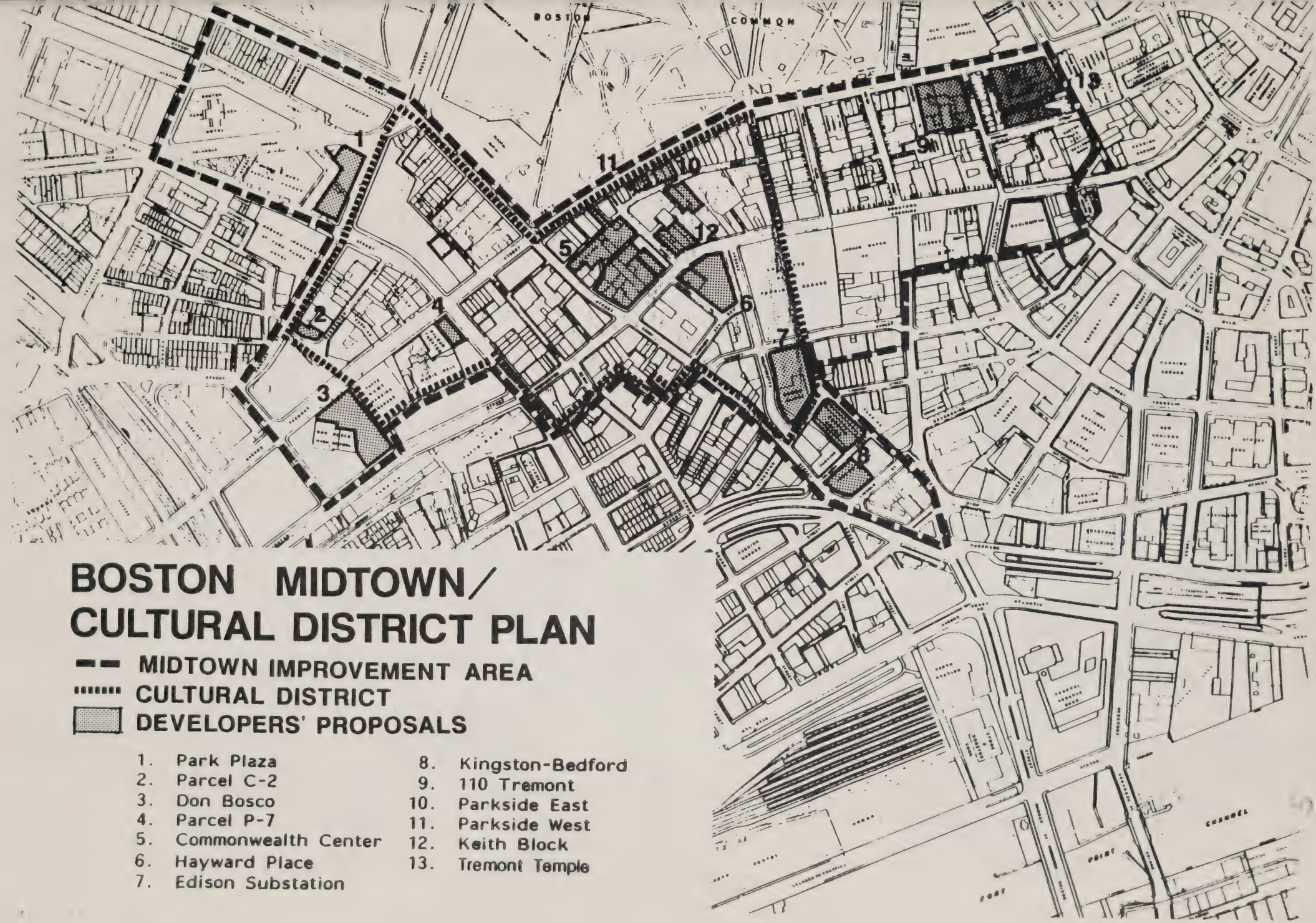
The city is currently working with the design firm of Kohn, Pederson, Fox to develop detailed design guidelines to document the plan's objectives of creating balanced development in the Midtown/Cultural District. The design study will focus on creating an image for the district through signage, active public spaces, and the detailed design guidelines that will blend new

development with the historic and cultural fabric of the Midtown/Cultural District. Transportation planning is also underway. A traffic pattern study will highlight the key traffic issues in the area and options to resolve them.

New Zoning

New zoning regulations will establish height and mass guidelines through a three-year community planning process. New zoning will link new development to the needs of local arts groups as determined through an assessment undertaken in conjunction with the Office of the Arts and Humanities. Linkages may take the form of cash contributions, joint ventures with local arts groups to develop cultural facilities, or contributions to on or off-site cultural facilities.

The strength of the Boston economy, and the deeply rooted community support for the arts are on the side of making a plan for the Midtown/Cultural District a success. Such a plan would being Boston closer to a network of cultural facilities and programs that would bring the arts to every resident of the city.



BOSTON MIDTOWN/ CULTURAL DISTRICT PLAN

- MIDTOWN IMPROVEMENT AREA
- CULTURAL DISTRICT
- DEVELOPERS' PROPOSALS

1. Park Plaza
2. Parcel C-2
3. Don Bosco
4. Parcel P-7
5. Commonwealth Center
6. Hayward Place
7. Edison Substation
8. Kingston-Bedford
9. 110 Tremont
10. Parkside East
11. Parkside West
12. Keith Block
13. Tremont Temple

1 THEATER BOULEVARD/WASHINGTON STREET

2 THEATER ALLEY/HAYWARD PLACE

3 THEATER ALLEY/BOYLSTON PLACE

4 THEATER BOULEVARD/TREMONT STREET

M3/B16
RA
87/12
pt. 4 of 9

Boston has grown into a rich, diverse city of pleasant streets, public spaces, and distinctive districts. The unique characteristics of each district contribute and are essential to Boston's character. Planning for the city therefore, requires that each of these districts be studied individually. To succeed in doing this, a number of community-based district planning initiatives modeled after the Boylston Street Zoning process will be undertaken in several areas of the downtown. During the next three years these initiatives will be undertaken in nine districts: (1) Huntington Avenue/Prudential Center; (2) Midtown/Cultural district, (3) Financial district, (4) Government Center/Market; (5) North Station; (6) Cambridge Street; (7) Chinatown; (8) Bulfinch Triangle; (9) the Leather District; and (10) South Station.

The planning studies will require the continuing participation of the community, local businesses, and design professionals. The studies will vary in their focus depending on major community concerns. They will examine particular design and development issues that will lead to the formulation of district guidelines, zoning amendments and other measures that address housing affordability, traffic management, public improvements, historic preservation and the urban design of each district.

The Boston Civic Design Commission, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Zoning Commission, and a number of professional groups will monitor the district studies in terms of how they relate to each other and to the city as a whole.

1. Huntington Avenue/Prudential Center

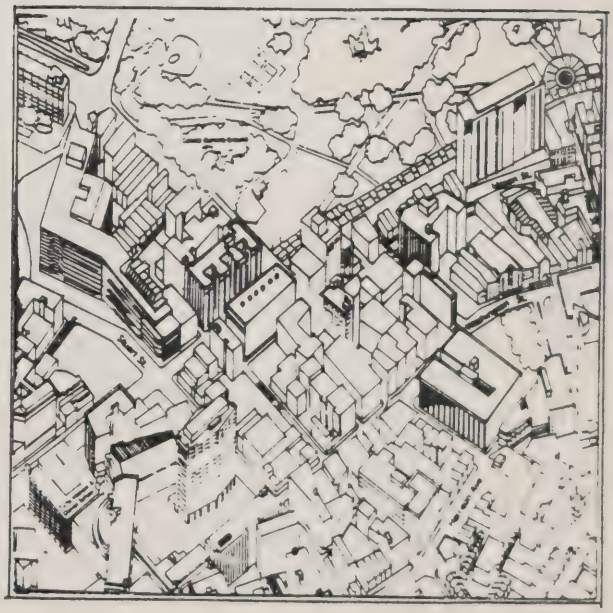
The section of Huntington Avenue between Copley Square and Symphony Hall forms the transitional boundary between the historic St. Botolph Street and South End areas and the large scale Prudential Center.

Built in the 1960's over underutilized rail yards and the Massachusetts Turnpike, the Prudential Center has recently acknowledged the need to make improvements that better integrate its design with adjacent districts.

The community planning effort in this area will focus on improving the streetwall and pedestrian connections, and encourage a mix of retail and residential uses to increase pedestrian activity along the street.

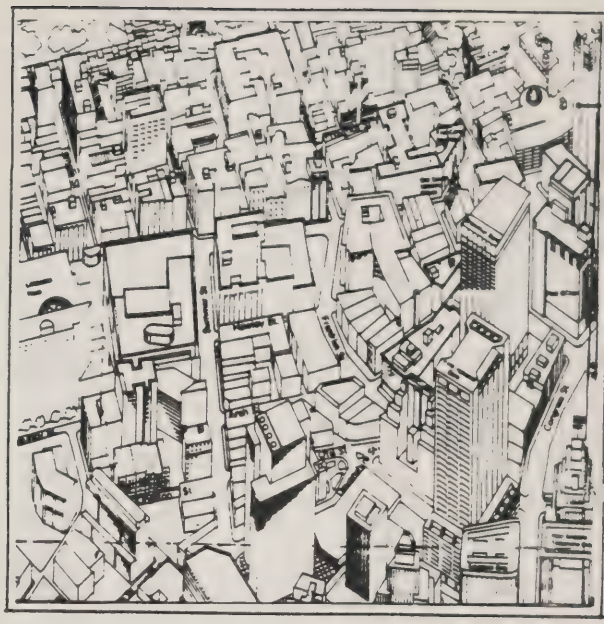
2. Midtown/Cultural District

This area includes those blocks that wrap around the southern edge of the Common and Public Garden, and the Cultural District. The narrow irregular streets and small, pedestrian alleys provide unique opportunities for rehabilitation, streetscape improvements, additional retail uses, and smaller, more flexible performing arts spaces to emphasize the area's unique character. This study area also includes the City's main retail area along Washington Street.



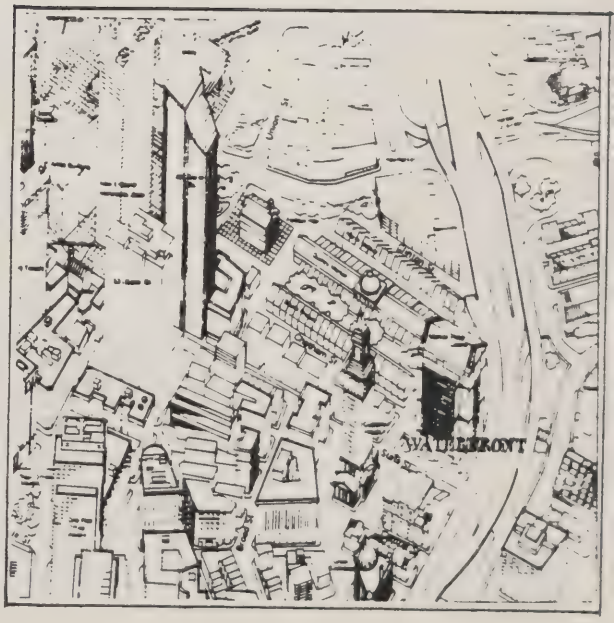
3. Financial District

As the center of trade, State Street and its gradual expansion into the Financial District has always housed Boston's major office and exchange buildings. After the great fire of 1872, a major section of the area was rebuilt with victorian "Commercial Palaces". In the 1960's the development of giant office towers formed the core of Boston's service-based economy.



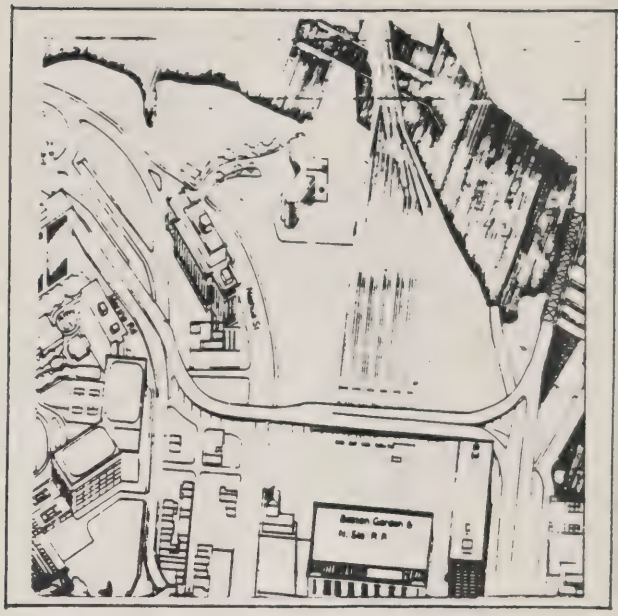
4. Government Center/Markets

In 1961, the 60-acre Scollay Square area was targeted for urban renewal and cleared. The new pattern of freestanding government buildings and plazas typifies the grand master plan of the era. The Blackstone Block, with its colonial-era lanes, once overlooked the Town Cove upon which Quincy Market was built in the 1820's. The Broad Street Associates filled the area to the south for brick and granite warehouses. After the decline of shipping, the area stood still, awaiting the recent revitalization which has played upon its historic charm.



5. North Station

North Station was built with the Boston Garden in the late 1920's. Urban renewal of the adjacent West End and Government Center areas is the 1960's had little impact on the North Station area. Major redevelopment projects are currently posed at this major transportation node for an improved arena and for the vast area of former railyards extending to the Charles River. This area serves as a gateway to downtown Boston.

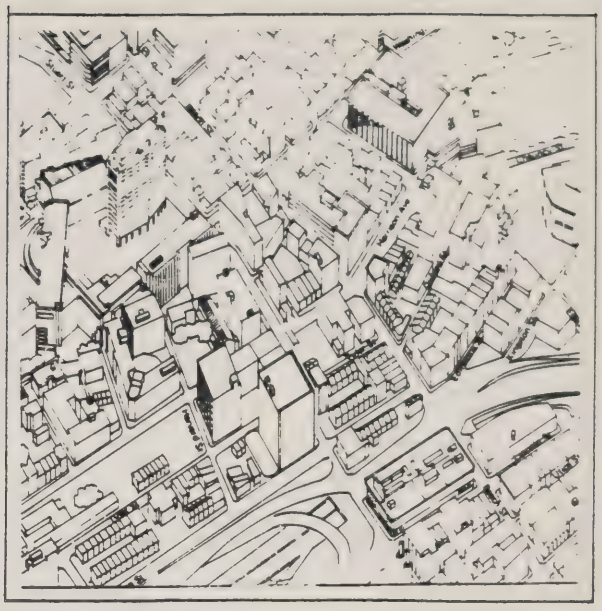


6. Cambridge Street

Cambridge Street forms the commercial seam between historic Beacon Hill and the West End Urban Renewal area. A subway station at each end joints Government Center with the Esplanade. The street has considerable potential but little identity, due to a number of underutilized sites and pronounced inconsistencies along its street walls. With notable vistas at the top, bottom, and down side streets, there is ample opportunity for Cambridge Street to become a strong transition between Beacon Hill and West End.

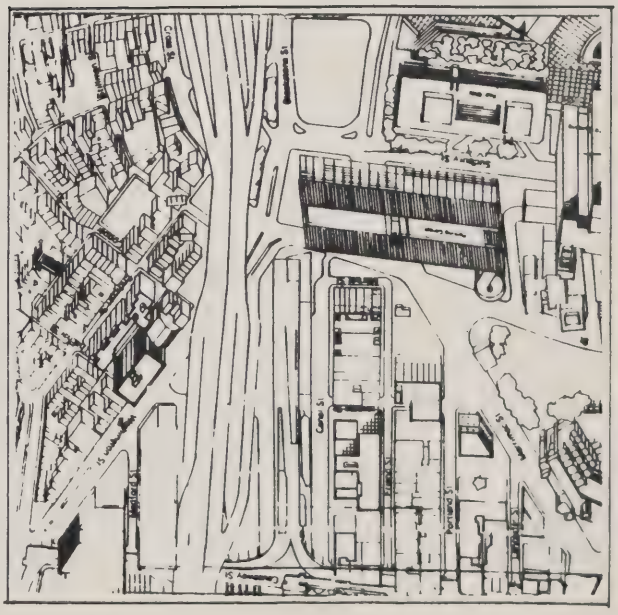
7. Chinatown

Chinatown is one of several small districts that make up the southern side of the downtown core, and has historically provided labor for the adjacent Garment and Leather Districts. In order to protect Chinatown from the impacts of speculation and displacement, the City is working with the Chinese Community to promote the expansion of its present boundaries, in order to accommodate the critical need for additional residential, commercial and industrial space.



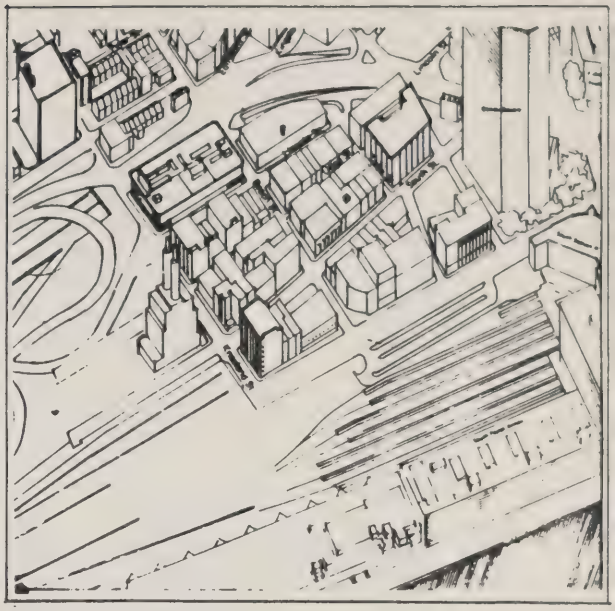
8. Bulfinch Triangle

As a precedent to the Back Bay, the Mill Cove with its dam at Causeway Street was filled in the early 1800's based upon a street plan by Charles Bulfinch. Here the regional center of the furniture trade was housed in the Victorian brick factories and warehouses which remain as a cohesive district. The district's distinctive triangular street pattern is reinforced by many similarly massed buildings that emphasize corner features, especially along Merrimac Street. In recent years, a number of these handsome masonry structures have been renovated into office space.



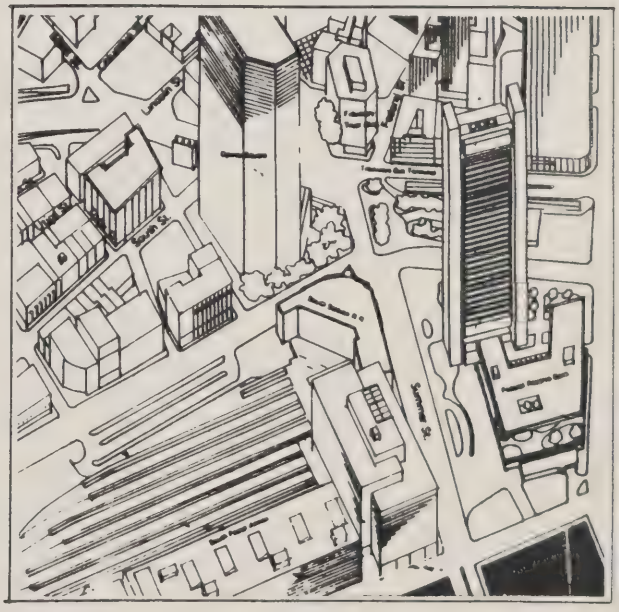
9. The Leather District

The Leather District is an eight-block area in the downtown separated from Chinatown by The Central Artery. The buildings are generally four to six stories high and built of brick and heavy timber construction in the late 19th Century. These architecturally significant structures housed both the manufacture and wholesale distribution of shoes and other leather products. Because the demand for multiple floor storage space has declined, many of the buildings are empty. Artists have recently discovered the area's numerous loft spaces, but the proximity of the area to the heart of the Financial District has peaked the interests of office developers and demolition and conversion of buildings has occurred.



10. South Station

The crescent shaped area around South Station includes a number of major development sites and a major transportation terminal project presently under construction. Excellent transportation access provides the area with the potential for more intensive commercial and parking development then would be appropriate elsewhere in the Downtown.



m3 / B16
RA
87/2
pt. 5 of 9

SELECTED PAGES FROM

SUMMARY FINDINGS FROM THE 1986 OFFICE INDUSTRY SURVEY

Boston Redevelopment Authority

CHARLESTOWN
GOVERNMENT
WATERFRONT
Charles River Basin
FINANCIAL DISTRICT
BOSTON COMMON
RETAIL DISTRICT
BACK BAY
Fort Point Channel
FORT POINT CHANNEL

Summary and Introduction

The 1986 Office Industry Survey, an update of a similar survey conducted in 1978, is an in depth look at the office market in downtown Boston. The Survey has three distinct parts - an inventory of office space, an owner/manager segment and an office tenant section. Information is gathered through the administration of questionnaires to owner/manager and tenant groups. The owner/manager questionnaire is designed to provide information on building stock, operating costs, leasing and financing arrangements, rents, vacancy rates, firms occupying space in downtown Boston's office buildings and other related issues. The Office Tenant Survey is an attempt to elicit information on the characteristics and industries of firms leasing space downtown and factors influencing their choice of location, as well as employees' job classifications, salary ranges and commuting patterns. When completed, the Survey should provide planners and policy makers with a base of information to assist them in making decisions about growth and development within the city.

Currently, the inventory of office space in downtown Boston has been completed. The Office Tenant Survey is progressing, with 50 percent of the tenant sample having been interviewed and data coded and entered. The Owner/Manager Survey is nearing completion, with 85 percent of owners/managers having been interviewed and some data coded. This report will summarize partial data from the tenant survey and will offer observations from the Owner/Manager Survey. Complete, detailed reports on the Owner/Manager Survey and the Office Tenant Survey will be issued at a later time.

Methodology

The Office Industry Survey was begun with the creation of an inventory of office space in downtown Boston. The inventory yielded a list of 423 buildings, representing 41,415,321 square feet of office space. From the inventory, a random sample of buildings was drawn and stratified to include buildings in each class* and market area (see map for definition of market areas). Over time the sample has been modified. Buildings whose owners/managers have declined to participate in the Survey have been dropped and alternatives within the same class and market area have been added - wherever possible. The sample currently includes 98 buildings with 7,789,742 square feet of space. Table 1 shows the proportion of space that sample buildings in each market area represent of the total sample as compared with each market area's share of the total space inventory. Table 2 notes the proportion each building class represents of the total sample (in terms of square feet) as compared to each building classes' share of the total inventory. These tables indicate that one can accurately extrapolate from the sample data described below to the universe of office space in downtown Boston.

TABLE 1 Proportion of Sample Survey Square Feet in Each Market Area Compared to the Market Area Distribution of the Total Inventory, Boston, 1986

MARKET AREA	SQUARE FEET in SAMPLE (NUMBER)	(PERCENT)	SQFT in TOTAL INVENTORY (NUMBER)	(PERCENT)
BACK BAY	1,157,510	15	9,054,148	22
FINANCIAL	4,485,356	58	21,463,606	52
FORT POINT CHANNEL	712,000	9	1,835,328	4
GOVERNMENT	472,000	6	4,184,990	10
RETAIL	621,750	8	4,240,223	10
CHARLESTOWN	223,713	3	243,713	1
WATERFRONT	117,413	2	393,313	1
TOTAL	7,789,742	100	41,415,321	100

TABLE 2 Proportion of Sample Survey Square Feet in Each Building Class Compared to Each Class' Share of the Total Inventory, Boston, 1986

CLASS	SQUARE FEET in SAMPLE (NUMBER)	(PERCENT)	SQ.FT. in TOTAL INVENTORY (NUMBER)	(PERCENT)
A1	2,750,842	35	18,368,345	44
A2	2,179,440	28	7,800,423	19
B1	1,986,790	26	10,574,587	26
B2	426,097	5	2,279,720	5
C	446,573	6	2,392,246	6
TOTAL	7,789,742	100	41,415,321	100

SOURCE: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OCTOBER, 1986

Tenants tend to refer to their Financial District installations as "headquarters" (41% of firms interviewed) or "main office" (65 percent of firms interviewed), indicating that some firms have both their headquarters and their main office at the same location. See Table 4. The table reveals that the firms interviewed have several different kinds of operations at one location.

Table 4. Firm Descriptions of their Financial District Installations

Types of Installation	Percent of Firms Responding in Sample
Corporate Headquarters	41
Main Office	65
Branch Office	31
Service and Sales Office	20
Computer operation	26
Back Office Space	24
Research and Development	15
Other	7

One survey question involves firms' views of various areas of the city. Firms were asked if they felt given areas of the city outside the Financial District and Back Bay were appropriate locations for their operations. Table 18 summarizes their responses.

Table 18. Firms Responses to the Prospect of Relocating in Different Neighborhoods Within the City of Boston (in percent)

Neighborhood	Firms Viewing Neighborhoods as a Suitable Location	Firms Viewing Neighborhoods as as Unsuitable Location	Total
Midtown	48	52	100
Broad Street	54	6	100
Government District	18	82	100
Waterfront	59	46	100
South Boston	16	84	100
South Station	45	55	100
North Station	13	87	100
Charles	5	95	100
East Boston	2	98	100
Corridor	2	98	100
Allston	5	95	100
South End	2	98	100

Back Bay Market Area

The Back Bay Survey sample includes 24 buildings or, 24 percent of the total sample, representing 1,157,510 square feet of office space or 15% of the total sample. Sample buildings are distributed over all building classes. See Table 19

Table 19. Building Class Sample in Back Bay

Building Class	Number of Buildings	Square Feet	
		Number	Percent
A1	1	207,832	18
A2	4	459,964	40
B1	13	288,601	25
B2	1	151,770	13
C	5	49,343	14
Total	24	1,157,510	100

A final avenue of exploration was to determine whether or not firms perceived particular Boston neighborhoods to be suitable locations for their operations. Table 39.

Table 39. Firms Perceptions of Boston Neighborhoods as Appropriate Locations for Their Operations

Neighborhood	Percent Perceiving Neighborhood as Suitable	Percent Perceiving Neighborhood as unsuitable	Total
Midtown	88	12	100
Broad Street	32	68	100
Government District	9	91	100
Boston Waterfront	35	65	100
Fort Point Channel	22	78	100
South Station	26	74	100
North Station	18	82	100
Charlestown	6	94	100
East Boston	3	97	100
Southwest Corridor	3	97	100
Fenway/Kenmore	28	72	100

SPECIAL STUDY AREAS

1 HUNTINGTON AVE./ PRUDENTIAL
2 MIDTOWN/ CULTURAL DISTRICT
3 FINANCIAL DISTRICT
4 GOVERNMENT CENTER/ MARKETS
5 NORTH STATION
6 CAMBRIDGE STREET
7 CHINATOWN
8 BULFINCH TRIANGLE
9 LEATHER DISTRICT
10 SOUTH STATION

▬▬ BOUNDARY LINES DIVIDING SPECIAL STUDY AREAS
- - - CULTURAL DISTRICT

M3/B16
RA
87/2
pt. 6 of 9

Charles River Basin
BOSTON INNER HARBOR
Fort Point Channel
BOSTON COMMON
BEACON
CHARLES
TREMONT
WASHINGTON
FRANKLIN
ATLANTIC
CENTRAL ARTERY
CONGRESS
NEW SUDBURY
CAMBRIDGE
COMMONWEALTH AVE.
BOYLSTON
MASS. TURNPIKE
HUNTINGTON AVE.
COLUMBUS
KNEELAND
HARRISON AVE.
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

M3/B16
RA
87/2
pt. 7 of 9

EAST BOSTON

SUMNER TUNNEL
CALLAHAN TUNNEL

COMMERCIAL

NORTH END**

BOSTON
INNER
HARBOR

CENTRAL ARTERY

CONGRESS

MAY FLOWER

CAMBRIDGE

LOWDON

ATLANTIC AVE.

EAST INDIA

SUMNER

FRANKLIN

WASHINGTON

ESSEX

BEACH

Charles River Basin

STORROW DRIVE

PUBLIC GARDEN

ARLINGTON

BOSTON COMMON

COMMONWEALTH AVE.

BOYLSTON STREET IPOD*

MIDTOWN/ CULTURAL DIST. IPOD

MASS. TURNPIKE

HUNTINGTON AVE.

SOUTH END

Fort Point Channel

FORSYTH

K

F

J

C

N

M

B

L

G

A

I

E

H

D

DOWNTOWN IPOD BUILDING HEIGHT STANDARDS

APPENDIX A ARTICLE 27D

PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREAS
SUBDISTRICTS A-E: 40′ and 65′

RESTRICTED GROWTH AREAS
SUBDISTRICTS F-G: 80′ - 100′

MEDIUM GROWTH AREAS
SUBDISTRICTS H-J: 125′ - 155′

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS
SUBDISTRICTS K-L
- NORTH STATION: 250′ - 350′
- SOUTH STATION/ BEDFORD/ESSEX: 300′ - 400′

OPEN SPACE
SUBDISTRICTS M-N

* IN THE BOYLSTON STREET IPOD HEIGHTS LIMITS RANGE FROM 90′ - 120′

** NORTH END - EXISTING HEIGHT LIMIT OF 55′

▬ ▬ MIDTOWN IMPROVEMENT AREA

- - - CULTURAL DISTRICT

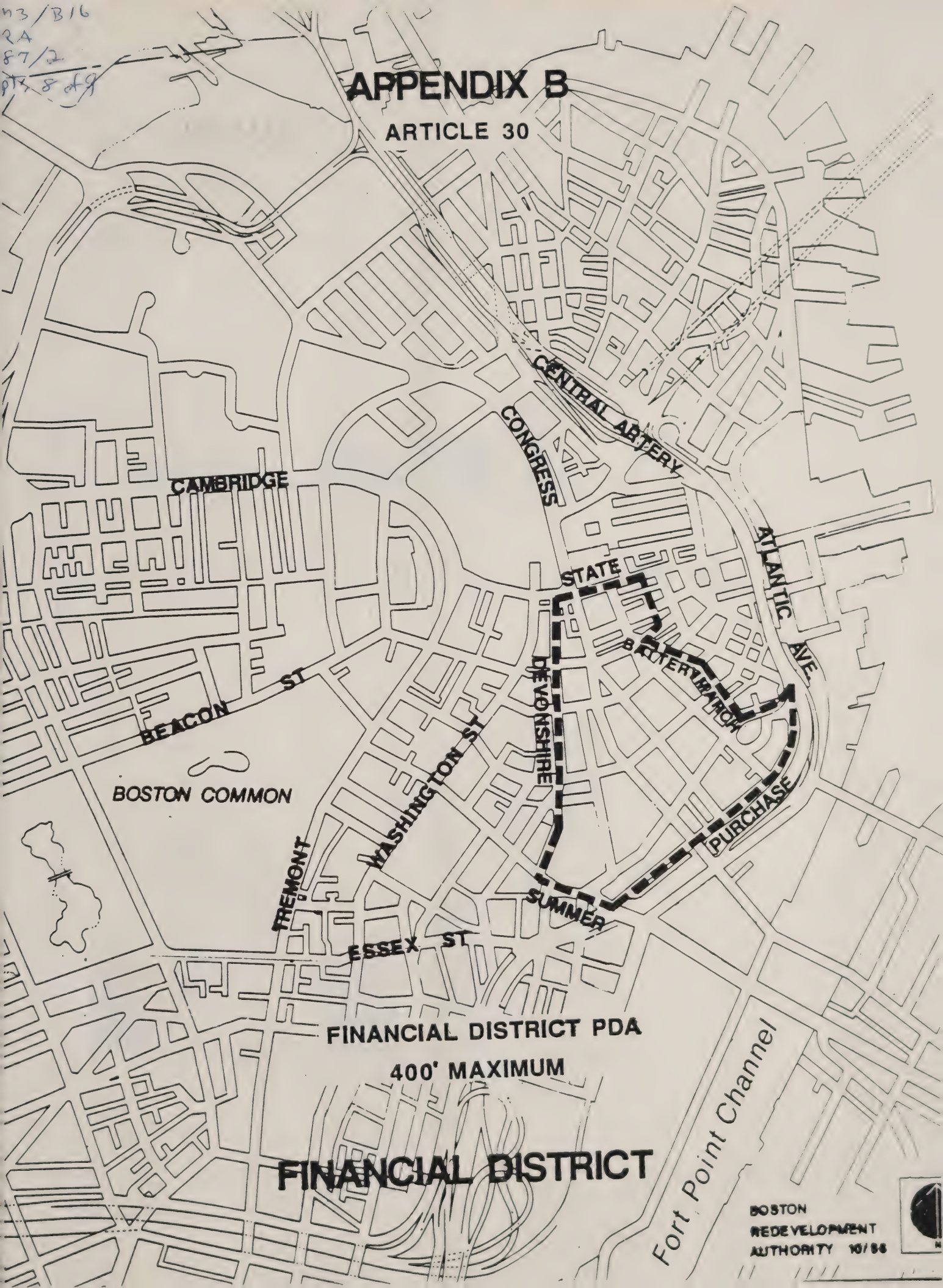
NOTE: WHERE EXISTING ZONING CONTAINS MORE RESTRICTIVE HEIGHT LIMITS (OR FARs) THAN THE IPOD, EXISTING ZONING GOVERNS, EXCEPT IN SUBDISTRICTS (I), (K), AND (L)

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
date 1/87

n3/B16
RA
87/2
pt 8 of 9

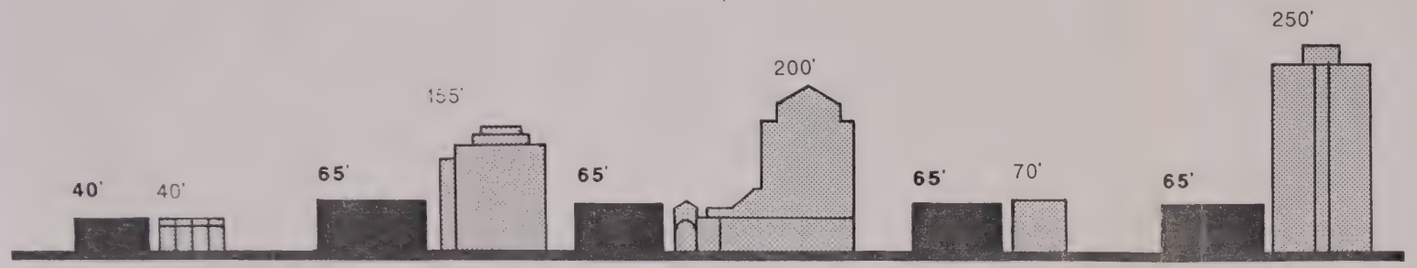
APPENDIX B

ARTICLE 30



BUILDING HEIGHTS

- Proposed Subdistrict Height Limits
- Existing Buildings
- Bonus Heights Available in Economic Development Areas
- Height Allowance (Based on Architectural Compatibility)



SUBDISTRICT A
Bay Village

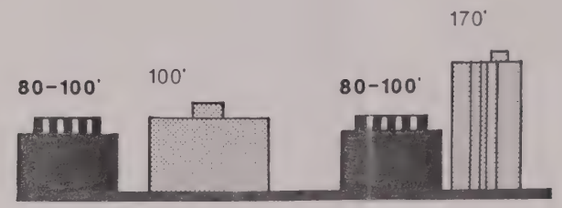
SUBDISTRICT B
Back Bay/ Beacon Hill

SUBDISTRICT C
Custom House

SUBDISTRICT D
St. Botolph Street *

SUBDISTRICT E
St. Germain Street

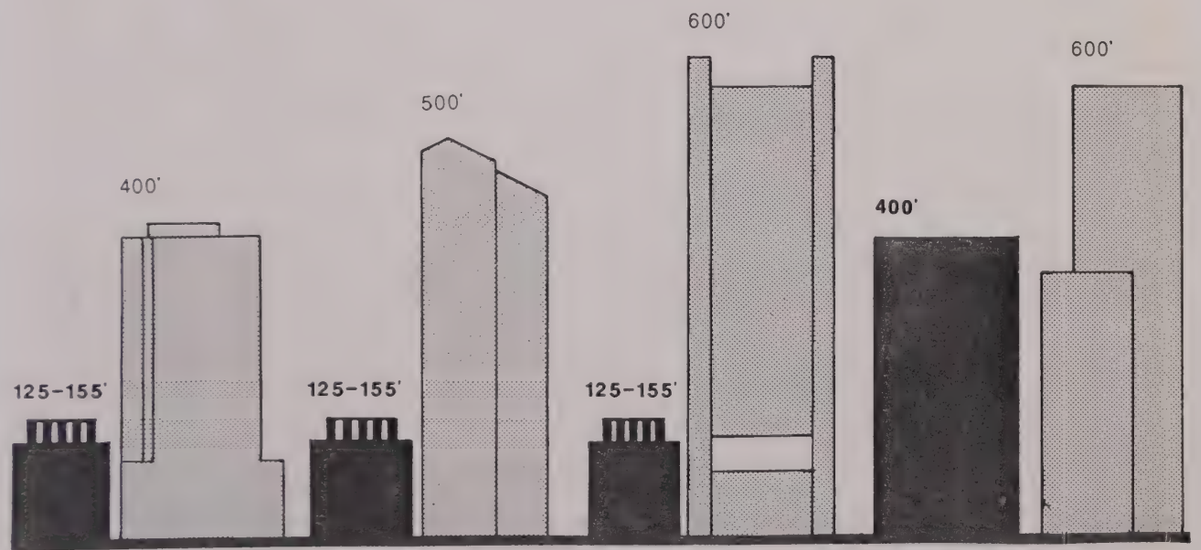
I PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREAS



SUBDISTRICT F
Bulfinch Triangle

SUBDISTRICT G
South Cove
Chinatown

II RESTRICTED GROWTH AREAS



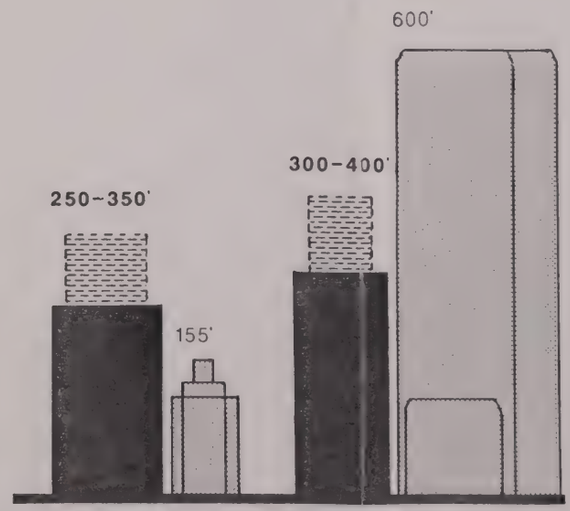
SUBDISTRICTS H, I
Huntington Avenue
Massachusetts Avenue/
Mass Pike Air Rights

SUBDISTRICT J
Park Frontage
Downtown Crossing
Government Center

SUBDISTRICT J
Financial District

SUBDISTRICT J
Financial District
(PDAs only)

III MEDIUM GROWTH AREAS



SUBDISTRICT K
North Station

SUBDISTRICT L
Bedford/ Essex/
South Station

IV ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

*The height limit for most of St. Botolph Street is 45' under current zoning; except in EDAs, the more restrictive of current zoning and IPOD height limits governs.